

Get Psyched!

Issue #1: February 2007



Welcome to our first of many newsletters, with timely articles on a wide range of topics, from sport and exercise to general mental health concerns. Our group consists of psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and consultants who are ready to help you improve your performance, in any aspect of your life. Visit us at Suite 201 in the AIHF, look at our website: www.CarolinaPerformance.net, or call **676.9699** for more information.

Get Psyched to Take the Next Step, by Dr. Michelle Joshua

Whew! The holidays are over. Turkeys, bellies, and stockings have been stuffed. Fires, candles, and menorahs have been lit. And we all know that we're supposed to set and achieve our new health and fitness resolutions, right?

In a perfect world, we set lofty goals and achieve them by year's end. More often than people care to talk about, however, we fail to live up to our own expectations for growth and change. People often tell me that they feel stuck in their workout routines, regardless of their status as a beginning exerciser, recreational athlete, or elite competitor. And when we feel stuck or frustrated that we are not progressing to the next level, it is hard to get motivated for change when there doesn't seem to be an obvious solution. So whether you are considering taking up rollerblading, running a 5K, or completing an Iron Man, here is a game plan that may be helpful for moving you towards your next goal.

The first step is to identify why you might feel stuck in your current routine. Ask yourself: *What is my dilemma? What obstacles are getting in my way?* Once you have a clear understanding of your challenges, you are in better position to work out your workout issue. Here are a few of the most common reasons why people feel

stuck and some strategies for addressing the problem.

Feeling like you are not good enough to move to the next level. It is times like these when social support from friends, coaches, or loved ones can go a long way. Not only can they provide you encouragement to try new things, they can likely give you more objective feedback than you can give yourself. Another way people find motivation is by reading inspirational stories about other people who share similar personal characteristics or situations (e.g., age, athletic ability, or body-type).

Fear of failure. A helpful strategy for dealing with this common fear is to reframe your situation. Look at your experience from another perspective. I often suggest that the only way you can ever fail is to not try. When we stretch ourselves to move out of our comfort zones, that's where growth and learning occur, regardless of whether we achieve what we set out to do or not.

Fear of success. Believe it or not, there are many people who are deterred from doing

something because they may be successful. If this reason rings true for you, consider the reasons why achievement might be frightening. Often, success comes with having new expectations for yourself, or feeling that others will expect more from you. It is possible that you may be putting too much pressure on yourself, or putting too much energy into worrying about what other people think.

Too busy or not enough time. This may be the most common concern that I hear. While we can't add more hours to our day, it may be helpful to problem-solve ways to train more efficiently. Can you get more creative with your time management strategies? For instance, you might combine your errands and get in a workout as well if you run to the store and then carry your groceries home on a brisk walk.

And fortunately for us, there are times when taking the next fitness step can actually decrease your workout time. Consider the common transition from walking a 5K race to running one. It takes less time to jog the three miles than it does to walk the same distance. While you may not be able to jog for more than 10 steps when beginning on your new goal, your overall workout time will decrease as you increase your jogging time.

